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TAGS: [IZ](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#)
SUBJECT: SUNNIS NOT DELAYING REFORMS, VP HASHIMI TELLS
CODEL MCCAIN

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi told Senators McCain and Graham that Sunnis are marginalized in the Iraqi government and are increasingly questioning the benefits of political participation. Sunnis are now actively engaged in eliminating al-Qa'ida, yet 95% of detainees in Iraq are Sunnis, al-Hashimi claimed. Delays in passing benchmark legislation are not the Sunnis' fault, claimed al-Hashimi, adding that Sunnis support the Hydrocarbon law and want local elections as soon as possible. END SUMMARY.

NO BENEFITS OF POLITICAL PARTICATION FOR SUNNIS

[12](#). (C) Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi told Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham on July 3 that Iraq faces a major political problem. There is no power sharing; the Sunni political leadership is marginalized, and Sunnis are increasingly asking what the benefits of political participation were. The Sunnis are fighting with the Coalition to eliminate al-Qa'ida and should get some respect and reward, said al-Hashimi. Yet 95% of detainees in local detention centers are Sunnis, claimed al-Hashimi.

YES TO HYDROCARBON LAW - MORE TIME FOR REVENUE SHARING LAW

[13](#). (C) Tawafuq has no problem with the hydrocarbon law, said al-Hashimi. It was the Kurds who were complicating matters by insisting that the Revenue Sharing Law be passed concurrently. The Sunnis need to make sure that the laws serve the common interests of all Iraqis and cannot be asked to decide in a matter of days. Ambassador Crocker pushed back, telling al-Hashimi that the issues are well known and have been debated for years - the Sunnis cannot say they need more time for discussion. Tawafuq Planning Minister Ali Baban was involved in the negotiations for months. Al-Hashimi responded that Tawafuq always made clear that it had technical reservations with the bills.

REGIONAL ELECTIONS MUST INCLUDE DISPLACED IRAQIS

[14](#). (C) Senator McCain told VP al-Hashimi that the Congress will condemn the Iraqi Government if it does not hold provincial elections. Senator Graham commented that local elections would play well in the United States, especially since the Sunnis boycotted the 2005 elections. VP al-Hashimi said that the Sunnis want local elections as soon as possible. He cautioned however, that the electoral law must account for the four million Iraqis, mostly Sunnis, who were displaced from their homes, including those living abroad. Because of the displacements, there was an electorate

imbalance, especially in Baghdad. The displaced Iraqis must be allowed to participate in the local elections, al-Hashimi implored.

SUNNIS NOT TO BLAME FOR BENCHMARK DELAYS

15. (C) VP al-Hashimi rejected suggestions that he set a time limit on progress in passing the benchmark legislation. Outlining each of the benchmarks in turn, he asked rhetorically who was blocking progress:

- De-Ba'athification Law - The committee worked out an acceptable draft, but the Prime Minister presented an alternative proposal at the last minute and blocked progress.

- Hydrocarbon framework and Revenue Sharing Laws - The law was discussed in the Cabinet and Tawafuq Ministers were told to vote in favor. Then the Kurds demanded linking the law with passage of revenue sharing legislation, thereby delaying passage of the oil law.

- Provincial Elections were delayed by the government.

- Constitutional Reform - The committee working on constitutional reform had reached agreement on most of the main articles when the Kurds announced that they had changed their minds and now reject items previously agreed to.

16. (U) CODEL McCain did not have the opportunity to clear this message.

CROCKER